

### Remarks

Claims 1-26 are pending in this application. Claims 1-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brooks, Jr. et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,067,530) in view of Cedergren (U.S. Patent No. 5,164,718). Applicants believe that the invention is patentable.

Claim 1 recites an electronic lock and money control system comprising at least one safe. The safe includes a housing having an interior compartment for securing money, and an outer door having an electronic mechanism to control access to the interior compartment. The safe further comprises a data input device, an electronic display, a connector interface mounted to the housing and a control system. The control system is arranged to communicate with the data input device, electronic display, connector interface, and electronic lock mechanism. The control system includes a processor programmed to control operation of the electronic lock. The processor further is programmed to operate as a central system controller when connected to at least one other remote safe via the connector interface to monitor and accumulate financial and operational information for each remote unit.

The Examiner states that Brooks, Jr. in view of Cedergren suggests the invention, and relies on Brooks, Jr. as suggesting the safe control system including a processor programmed to control operation of the electronic lock as well as operate as a central system controller when connected to at least one other remote safe. However, Brooks, Jr. fails to suggest this claimed feature, and as such, the combination of Brooks, Jr. in view of Cedergren fails to suggest the invention.

Brooks, Jr. describes a cash management system. When there are multiple electronic cash registers in the Brooks, Jr. system (Figure 1B), the controller 36 associated with each register 38 is coupled to the store host computer 43. The store host computer 43 and controllers 36 are synchronized, and a controller 36 transmits to the store host computer 43 data related to each of the drops in a drop safe 24. Applicants direct the Examiner's attention to the fact that store host computer 43 is not part of a safe, and more particularly is not a

central system controller that is part of a safe, but rather is a separate computer connected to a number of controllers 36. Applicants' invention is far different than Brooks, Jr. in that claim 1 recites a safe including a control system that includes a processor programmed to control operation of the electronic lock for the safe as well as operate as a central system controller when connected to at least one other remote safe. That is, in the invention, the processor, which is part of the safe, operates as the central system controller. Brooks, Jr. does not illustrate the claimed feature and only illustrates a separate store host computer 43.

Cedergren fails to address this deficiency in Brooks, Jr., and the combination of Brooks, Jr. in view of Cedergren fails to suggest the invention. For these reasons, claim 1 is believed to be patentable.

Claims 2-10 are dependent related claims and are believed to be patentable for their dependency upon claim 1. Further, some of these dependent claims are believed to recite further patentable subject matter that is not suggested by Brooks, Jr. in view of Cedergren. For example, claim 5 recites an additional remote safe including a bill validator wherein the processor is programmed to maintain a record of all bills received and validated in the remote safe. For example, claim 7 recites an additional remote safe including a cash dispensing apparatus wherein the processor is programmed to maintain a record of all money loaded and dispensed from the remote safe. For example, claim 9 recites one or more remote safe units with the processor being further programmed to accumulate and track deposits and withdrawals of money among other features.

Claim 11 is an independent claim and recites a network of interconnected electronic locking and money control devices comprising a central processing system integrated with one of the electronic locking and money control devices among other limitations. For these reasons stated above, Brooks, Jr. in view of Cedergren fails to suggest a central processing system integrated with one of the electronic locking and money control devices (such as a safe) in a network of interconnected electronic locking and money control devices. Accordingly, claim 11 is also believed to be patentable.

Claims 12-26 are dependent claims and are believed to be patentable for their dependency upon claim 11.

For the reasons given above, claims 1-26 are believed to be patentable and allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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